

ABSTRACT

A controller (12) controls the engaging force of a lockup clutch (2c) connecting an engine (1) and an automatic transmission (3) via an engaging force regulating mechanism (11, 13). The controller (12) sets a target relative rotation speed (ω_{SLPT}) according to a difference between a target engine rotation speed (TGT_EREV) and an input rotation speed ($PriREV$) of the automatic transmission (3). When an initial engine rotation speed (ST_EREV) is smaller than the target engine rotation speed (TGT_EREV), the controller (12) causes the target relative rotation speed (ω_{SLPT}) to gradually vary from an initial relative rotation speed (ST_SREV) to a predetermined target change-over relative rotation speed (CHG_REV). By controlling the engaging force regulating mechanism (11, 13) on the basis of the target relative rotation speed (ω_{SLPT}) set in this way, a prompt and appropriate lockup operation of the lockup clutch (2c) is realized in response to the vehicle conditions.